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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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An interface between two or more self-describing devices each having a data store, and each device is in communication with one or more of the other devices, or the interface is between two ongoing processes on the same device sharing a common data store. The interface includes a datastream having at least one inventive metavariable where the metavariable is indicative of at least two or more parameters associated with a device, and the datastream occurs between the data store of one transmitting device to the data store of one or more receiving devices, or between two or more processes that may or may not share a common data store. The metavariable references or implies a number of other variables, and allows devices to effectively communicate without knowledge of the underlying variables. The metavariable can be data indicative of the configuration and settings of a device, such as the settings of a printer, or alternately can be a command altering two or more settings of a device upon receipt of the metavariable by the device, such as a command from a host computer to a printer to change settings. The metavariable also allows the abstraction of printer commands encompassing two or more variables such that functions and conceptual settings can be communicated in one metavariable. There is also provided an inventive method of communication between two or more devices or processes in an interface including the steps of generating a metavariable in a transmitting device or process, and transmitting the metavariable to one or more other receiving devices or processes through the interface. The method then includes the steps of receiving the metavariable at a receiving device or process, and processing the metavariable in the receiving device or process for evaluation of action required in response to receipt of the metavariable.